THE SAM

E



॥ श्रीः ॥

बुद्धचरिते तृतीयः सर्गः

तथा च

कुमारसंभवे पञ्चमः सर्गः

WITH

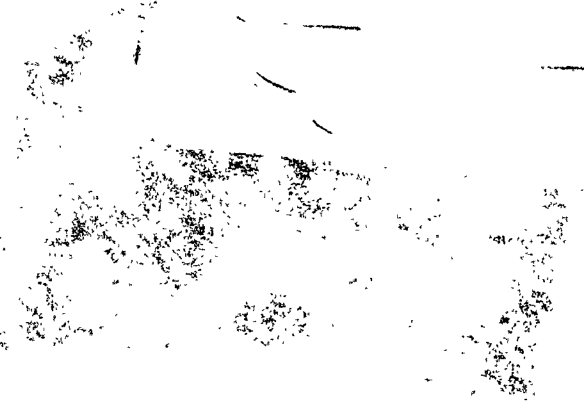
INTRODUCTION, NOTES, ENGLISH TRANSLATION, Etc.

PUBLISHED BY

THE SAMSKRITA SAHITYA SADANA,

BANGALORE CITY.

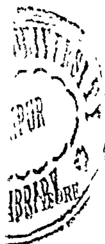




INTRODUCTION

Preliminary—In sanskrit any literary composition is generally termed *Kavya*. This *Kavya* is of two kinds; 1. *Drsya* and 2. *Sravya*. The 'seeable' literary writings such as the drama, belong to the former group, while the 'hearable' ones comprising of *Gadya* (prose), *Padya* (poetry) and the *Champu* (prose interspersed with poetry) belong to the latter. The *Padya* or metrical composition again is of two kinds in accordance with its length :—1, *Mahakavyas* (long poems) and 2. *Khandakavyas* (short poems). Kalidasa's Meghaduta is a *Khandakavya*, while his Kumarasambhava, and Asvaghosha's Buddhacharita are *Mahakavyas*.

The Mahakavya :—A Mahakavya must consist of not less than eight and not more than thirty cantos. The stanzas in each canto may range between thirty and two hundred. The poem may deal with the life of a single hero or with the account of a whole race of kings. The verses in any canto must be of a uniform metre which may be altered at the end of the canto. The close of every canto must suggest the subject matter of the succeeding one. *Sringara*, *Vira* or *Santa* should be the predominant sentiment in the poem whose object must be the attainment of the four *Purusharthas*, viz. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. The poem ought to be embellished with abundant figures of speech. It ought to contain descriptions of cities, seas, mountains, seasons, the rise of the sun and the moon, gardens, water-sport, drinking, love-sport, festivities, separation of lovers, marriages, birth of a son, counsels, the mission of ambassadors and the victories of war-lords. Such a *Kavya*, it is stated, will live to eternity.



The Buddhacharita :—This is a Mahakavya written by Asvaghosha in 28 cantos, but available only as a fragment. The first few verses in the very first canto are missing. The text is intact only upto the end of a quarter of the 14th sarga. We have to look into the Chinese or Tibetan translations of this Kavya, for the subject matter of the remaining sargas. Prof. Cowell has published a text of the first 17 sargas, where, as

he says, the last four sargas (excepting a few slokas in the 14th) ' have nothing corresponding to them in the Tibetan and Chinese versions '. He has also shown at length how these four sargas must have been written by one Amritananda and not Asvaghosha.

The Buddhacharita deals with the Acts of the Buddha. His birth as a prince, His life and parinirvana and the war over the relics and the reign of Asoka. The third canto is the best section in this work.

The Kumarasambhava is another MAHAKAVYA, written by Kalidasa. Although printed editions of this work consist of only 17 cantos, some scholars believe that the work extended to 22 cantos, while some others and well-known commentators hold that only the first 8 cantos were written by Kalidasa, because at the close of the eigth canto, there is a reference to the potential birth of the war-god and the remaining cantos exhibit a low taste, clumsy handling of the subject matter and a style which is definitely inferior to that of Kalidasa. The title KUMARASAMBHAVA can however apply only to the first eight cantos, as the later cantos deal with the fight of the demons with the gods and TARAKA's death The fifth canto of the Kumarasambhava is about the best in the whole of that Kavya.

The material for this work is mostly drawn from the Saivaite Puranas, largely from the Sivapurana.

Asvaghosha: His Date- Asvaghosha's Buddhacharita was translated to the chinese language in the fifth cent. A.D. This gives us the lower limit of his DATE. There are several traditional accounts which associate Asvaghosha with Kanishka. One Chinese tradition associates him also with ' the composition of the VIBHASHA, the great Sarvastivadin commentary of the Abhidharma, said to be the outcome o[f] a general council held in the reign of that Kushan king. [Fo[r] a list of Chinese authorities on the Asvaghosha legend se[e] J. A. 1908 ii 65 n -2.] But the date of the VIBHASHA is no[t] quite certain and the story of the council held in Kanishka'[s] reign at which it was drawn up is open to the grave suspi[-] cion of having been invented to secure authority for th[e] Sarvastivadin views '. Hence we will not be in error if we sa[y] that Asvaghosha must have lived long before the time at whi[ch]

such accounts first appear, i. e. the 4th cent. A. D. His vocabulary and style suggest that he is closer to Kautilya in date than to Kalidasa, and that he is not far removed from Bhasa. Hence it is very likely that Asvaghosha must have preceded Kanishka. At any rate he cannot be later than that Kushan king. The date of Kanishka, although not quite definite, is generally taken to be the last quarter of the first cent. A. D. Moreover, there is a mention of the Asoka legend in the last canto of the Buddhacharita. This determines the upper limit for the date of Asvaghosha. According to Prof. Przyluski, Asvaghosha knew some early form of ASOKAVADANA which had taken shape between 150 and 100 B. C. Roughly a hundred years have to be allowed for this to get recognition. Hence the upper limit of Asvaghosha's date has to be set at about 50 B. C. Thus he must have flourished at about the beginning of the Christian Era.

Asvaghosha's Life—Very little is known about the life of Asvaghosha. The colophons of his works describe him as a native of SAKETA and as the son of Suvarnakshi. His works show that he was vastly influenced by the Ramayana. It is very probable that he was born a Brahmin and was given the education of a Brahmin. 'He had an acquaintance...with all departments of Brahmanical learning including some knowledge of the Veda and ritual literature as well as mastery of all the sciences a KAVI was expected to have studied.' He writes 'for a circle in which Brahmanical learning and ideas are supreme; his references to Brahmans personally and to their institutions are always worded with the greatest respect, and his many mythological parallels are all drawn from Brahmanical sources.' E. H. Johnston). We learn that he got settled down in Kashmere and became the 12th Buddhist Patriarch. He was 'very little affected by the developments of the full blown Abhidharma, and to him the kernal of Buddhism lay in personal devotion to the Buddha and in the practice of yoga.' He states in the last verse of his Buddhacharita that, 'in his devotion to the Buddha, he studied the scriptures and wrote the work, not to display his learning or skill in KAVYA, but for the benefit and happiness of the world.' Thus, he is only a poet and a preacher, but not at all an original philosopher.